Self-Denial: The First Condition of the New Life

We are called to live as He lived, renouncing ourselves, as He renounced Himself. Self-denial is the starting point of the new life to which we have been called, being the first condition that Lord Jesus requires of those who wish to begin this new life.

Lord Jesus offered us a perfect image of “self-denial” towards the Father’s will, a fundamental principle in God’s “factory,” asking us to follow the same path in the process of perfection.

Lord Jesus, our Model, demonstrated through His personal example that a new beginning is not possible without self-denial. This fundamental principle is found in Luke 9:23: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” This verse explicitly guides us towards the path we must adopt.

Renouncing our self is a profound spiritual concept, defined by the dictionary as “renouncing personal opinions and ideas.”

This process of renouncing one’s own knowledge is similar to the development journey from the initial level, in an unknown field to us and without specific knowledge, to reaching the status of an expert. To learn and become like the expert, it is fundamental to set aside our own opinions and accept the methods and teachings of the expert.

A concrete example is that of computer-assisted cardiac surgery, a field about which many of us have no prior knowledge. In this situation, it is essential to rely on the guidance and expertise of a professional who understands this surgical process in depth. It is important to recognize the limits of our knowledge in the face of such advanced things, which are strictly necessary for practicing cardiac surgery.

In our spiritual context, we are called to renounce our own opinions and ideas to acquire the guidance of the One who guides and shapes our spiritual journey, recognizing that He has the perfect plan for our shaping.

To teach us to renounce our ideas and opinions, the Son of God serves as the perfect example. He remarkably renounced His self in His relationship with the heavenly Father, thus recognizing the perfection of God.

He showed us that He did nothing of Himself and that all His actions were in accordance with the will of the Father who acts perfectly in all He does. This is clearly expressed in John 5:19, where the Lord Jesus says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

This renunciation of one's own ideas is profoundly exemplified in Philippians 2:6-8, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."

This attitude, which shows His nature, radiates a light of perfect beauty. It stands as a bright beacon, inspiring anyone who observes it and offers us an ideal model to follow in our own spiritual journey. Lord Jesus, although was the Son of God, did not live according to His own ideas, but fully aligned His will with that of God.

Because the "Model" after which we must be transformed is perfect and surpasses human understanding, it becomes mandatory to adopt this attitude of renouncing our self. This means abandoning our personal opinions and ideas, following with devotion and loyalty the guidance of the One who is perfect. Through this, we recognize that His wisdom is perfect and His plan is superior to any human reasoning.

Self-denial is essential and functions as a key that opens the way to a complete transformation in Christ, allowing us to adopt all His values and principles which are perfect.

If we deeply admire Lord Jesus for the way He lived, we will also embrace self-denial and desire to practice it exactly as He did. This admiration and desire to follow His example will guide us in adopting this essential trait in this process.

We observe that, in today's world, renouncing one's own opinions and what we have previously learned is often viewed with disdain or ignored. This fact brings us to an essential question: Are we truly aware of the importance of self-denial in this process of transformation into the image of Christ?

Do we truly desire to live in the same self-denial that He exemplified? It is important to evaluate ourselves: In our relationship with God, do we truly have the desire to deny ourselves and renounce our limited human values?

Are we truly prepared to fully dedicate ourselves to the teachings of Christ? Are we open to being completely transformed into new beings? This radical transformation is described in 2 Corinthians 5:17, which states: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"Self-denial" represents a central pillar in the divine plan of salvation and is essential for our transformation in accordance with the image of Christ. Following Lord Jesus' example of "self-denial" is a challenge, but also a vital step in our spiritual growth and conformity to the character of Christ.

Without living with self-denial towards God’s instructions which are perfect, without renouncing our own opinions, the transformation process does not begin.

This post is an excerpt from the booklet “The Purpose of Life”, which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.